

# African Swallow-tailed Kite *Chelictinia riocourii* breeding in the Saloum Delta, Sénégal

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La première nidification de l'Elanion naucier *Chelictinia riocourii* au Sénégal a été constatée en janvier 2000, avec trois nids (dont deux avec des oeufs) découverts dans le Parc National du Delta du Saloum, et un quatrième 30 km au nord. Dans les deux cas on a trouvé, des nids d'autres rapaces (Elanion blanc *Elanus caeruleus*, Petit-Duc africain *Otus (scops) senegalensis* et Vantour oricon *Aegypius tracheliotus*) dans les environs immédiats.

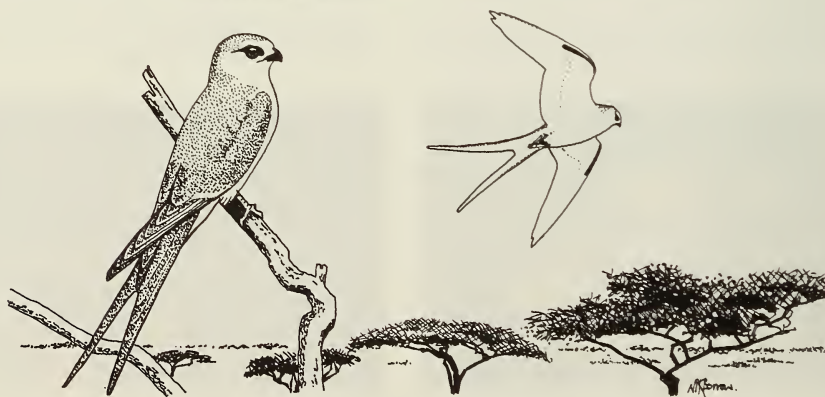
On 20 January 2000, near Sokoné in Saloum Delta National Park, Sénégal, warden Mansaly Valentin found three pairs of African Swallow-tailed Kites *Chelictinia riocourii*. Two individuals were incubating eggs, while the other pair was still engaged in courtship. The nests were constructed on stunted *Mitragyna inermis* trees in a patch of grassland surrounded by almost bare salt flats, on one of the delta's many islands. One nest was within the same bush as an African Scops Owl *Otus (scops) senegalensis* nest, which was hanging in a creeper *Abrus precatorius* and contained two fledged young. Less than 50 m away, a Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* nest, containing two almost full-grown chicks, was found near the top of another *Mitragyna* tree. Subsequent visits on 29 January and on 2 February confirmed the kites' continued breeding, while, on 10 February, another African Swallow-tailed Kite nest was found c30 km further north by Jacques Peeters, an advisor with Senegal's National Parks service. This nest was in the same tree (an *Acacia seyal*) as that of a Lappet-faced Vulture *Aegypius tracheliotus*. In early March, Mansaly Valentin visited the first site again. Both the owl and Black-shouldered Kite nests were empty, but ten pairs of *Chelictinia* had joined the earlier group of three. With the exception of one nest in an *Acacia seyal*, all of the new nests were in *Mitragyna inermis*

trees, which had by this time shed their leaves. These are the second breeding records of African Swallow-tailed Kite in Sénégal, following one in 1992<sup>1</sup>. The above observations also demonstrate that the species appears to be attracted to areas in which other large birds of prey are nesting<sup>2</sup>, but also to the nests of nocturnal birds of prey, and that it does not always nest colonially<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, Brown *et al.*<sup>4</sup> note only the use of *Acacia* and *Balanites* trees by nesting African Swallow-tailed Kite. ♀

## References

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African Swallow-tailed Kites *Chelictinia riocourii*  
by Nik Borrow (courtesy of Birdquest)